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**Tumbling "Component Walls" In Contingency  
Operations: A Trumpet's Blare For Standing  
Joint Task Force Headquarters**

**A Monograph  
by**

**Major John C. Coleman  
United States Marine Corps**

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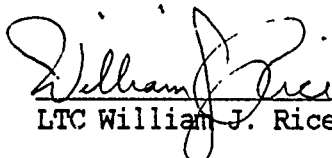
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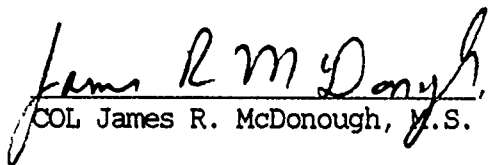
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## ABSTRACT

TUMBLING 'COMPONENT WALLS' IN CONTINGENCY OPERATIONS: A  
TRUMPET'S BLARE FOR STANDING JOINT TASK FORCE HEADQUARTERS  
by Major John C. Coleman, U.S. Marine Corps, 60 pages.

The principle aim of this study is to determine if further unification of service components below the combatant CINC level is required. More specifically, do the combatant CINC's require a standing joint task force (JTF) headquarters to provide operationally effective and efficient command and control during contingency operations where forced entry or other immediate commitment to combat action is required?

In answer to the research question, this study first presents a brief analysis of some recent significant changes in the world's strategic landscape which are dramatically increasing the importance of the ability of U.S. military forces to respond to regional contingencies. Secondly, the study highlights the nature of contingency operations by describing the characteristics of contingency operations, the characteristics required of contingency forces, and the demands these two combined place on a contingency force headquarters. Next, utilizing precepts from organization and decision-making theory, this study establishes suitable criteria which support evaluation of functional performance by a military organization at the operational level of war. Additionally, suspicions concerning the current methodology of fielding and immediately employing ad hoc joint task force headquarters are highlighted through a discussion of decision-making theory.

Armed with an appreciation of the nature of contingency operations and provided with a suitable criteria, the study next provides an evaluation of the functional performance at the operational level of the JTF headquarters formed in recent history. This discussion confirms that, in the short term, transient JTFs exhibit evidence of operational dysfunction. Further, the study indicates that much of this dysfunction is directly attributable to the last minute, extemporaneous formation of the headquarters coincidental to the contingency situation which requires its existence. The study concludes that in order to provide operationally effective and efficient command and control in contingency operations where immediate commitment to combat is required, the combatant CINCs require standing JTF headquarters.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

Through the mid-1980s critics of the U.S. military convincingly argued that, with few exceptions, the record of joint U.S. military forces in contingency operations was exceptionally dismal. Much of the blame for this poor showing was attributed to an inability of the services to achieve unity of effort due to excessive bias and parochialism or, as one prominent officer opined, a failure to penetrate the "walls of the service component."<sup>1</sup> In an effort to improve operational effectiveness and efficiency within the Department of Defense (DoD) in general, and specifically in the conduct of joint operations, the United States Congress passed the Goldwater/Nichols Act in 1986. Significant in this legislation was its intent to increase the unification of service components under combatant commanders in chief (CINC) by vastly increasing the CINCs' authority and responsibility. While it can be argued that this legislation has produced monumental improvements in interoperability, joint doctrine, and the responsiveness of the service components to the needs of the combatant CINCs, permanent unification of service components below the combatant command level remains essentially nonexistent.<sup>2</sup>

In view of recent successful joint contingency operations such as El Dorado Canyon, Ernest Will, Just Cause, Desert Shield and the recently completed Desert Storm, some might submit that the permanent unification of joint forces below the combatant CINC level is no longer relevant. However, none of the above contingencies required the immediate commitment of U.S. forces to combat action. Additionally, all were characterized by relatively significant preparation prior to the commencement of hostile action. The principle aim of this study is

to determine if further unification of service components below the combatant CINC level is required. More specifically, do the combatant CINCs require a standing joint task force (JTF) headquarters to provide operationally effective and efficient command and control during contingency operations where forced entry or other immediate commitment to combat action is required?

The study commences with an analysis of recent and dramatic changes in the world's strategic landscape which have significantly increased the importance of the ability of U.S. military forces to respond to regional contingencies. Further, it highlights how the changes in our overarching strategy have invalidated the former force planning assumptions applicable to the Cold War strategy. The initial discussion concludes by demonstrating that the new strategic focus coupled with continued fiscal austerity dictates that to meet tomorrow's contingency challenge, U.S. military forces must demonstrate the utmost in operational effectiveness and efficiency.

Next, a discussion of current doctrine is combined with recent historical illustrations to portray the characteristics of contingency operations and the characteristics required of contingency forces. With this foundation, the study reveals how these characteristics blend to describe the unique environment within which the contingency force command element operates. This discussion suggests several characteristics which, while not unique to the contingency force command element, are essential and must be well-developed upfront in the "come as you are" business of contingency operations.

Highlighting what is perceived as a current deficiency in the literature concerning the operational level of war and operational art,

attention is next devoted to establishing suitable criteria which support evaluation of functional performance by a military organization at the operational level of war. Additionally, theoretical discussions based largely on decision-making theory are presented which raise some suspicions concerning the current ad hoc methodology of fielding joint task force headquarters. This theoretical construct provides a basis for evaluation of recent contingency operations to determine if a "transient" JTF headquarters can achieve the utmost in operational effectiveness and efficiency in a situation which requires the immediate dispatch of forces into combat.

The final section of this monograph considers the weight of the evidence presented to determine whether, in fact, there is a valid requirement which mandates the creation of standing joint contingency task force headquarters. The findings are summarized and presented along with several implications and recommendations.

## II. THE INCREASED SIGNIFICANCE OF CONTINGENCY OPERATIONS

From the end of World War II (WWII) until very recently the strategic landscape of the world was defined by the two large and potentially hostile armies of NATO and the Warsaw Pact. Historical anomalies because of their peacetime size, these two legions stood face to face along a common European border which described an ideological demarcation in a bipolar world simplistically termed East and West. While the major antagonists among these two countervailing forces, the U.S. and the U.S.S.R., challenged each other worldwide through the manipulation of third world proxies, the focal point of their standoff was this eye to eye stare across the central European plains. And



while both nations most often chose to avoid direct confrontation, their continual challenges to each other throughout for global influence resulted in the somewhat simplistic, yet uniquely appropriate label for this period -- the Cold War.<sup>3</sup>

The military strategy of the U.S. during the Cold War might have been characterized as justifiably myopic with respect to the Soviet Union in general and the European continent in particular. Its principle themes reflected the strategies of deterrence, primarily of global nuclear and/or conventional war with Europe at center stage, and the containment of communism, particularly as exported by the Soviet Union. As a result, the DoD postulated a number of global warfare scenarios throughout this period. All of these envisioned at least one major war in central Europe with a "half war" occurring immediately prior or simultaneous to it in some other peripheral region. Indeed, in the early 1960s the DoD policy was based on fighting the "half war" without detracting from the ability to fight two other major wars simultaneously. This policy was scaled down by the end of the 1970s to reflect a 1 1/2 war strategy.<sup>4</sup>

Whether a 1 1/2 or 2 1/2 war strategy, these scenarios suggested planning assumptions which governed the design of operational concepts, force structure, equipment and training for both nuclear and conventional forces within DoD. Yet, bounded by fiscal restraints, the "half war" was frequently viewed as a requirement "which could be met with forces and systems sized, organized, and supported" to prosecute the major war in Europe. Thus, the "half war" variously referred to as a "brushfire war," "limited contingency," or simply "contingency" operation was relegated to a distant secondary role.<sup>5</sup>

Unfortunately, the history of U.S. combat actions since 1945 reflects that contingency operations have predominated on the superpowers' global playing field during this "era of violent peace."<sup>6</sup> Not surprisingly, and quite often with recurrent themes, the performance of U.S. forces in contingency operations has been subject to question.

However, while we may have suffered national recrimination and embarrassment regarding our joint performance in some contingencies, recent events have spawned an emerging vindication of our overarching strategy, particularly as related to the Soviet Union. Bankrupted by a wholehearted but ill-advised attempt to compete with the collective military, industrial, and technological might of the West, the Soviet Union laid waste to an economic system which was inferior from the start. Fueled by economic despair, ethnic unrest, and a desire for increased autonomy, the separate states of the Soviet Union began to openly challenge the central government. The combined effects of this ethnic, economic, and political malaise produced significant instability which has required the undivided attention of the central government and mandated a commensurate retrenchment from the foreign arena. Other events related to this retrenchment further signify the success of our strategy including the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact, the unification of Germany, and the emergence of democratic reform among former eastern block nations. Altogether these changes have significantly decreased the threat of conventional war in Europe or global war with the Soviet Union.<sup>7</sup>

The collective impact of this rapid eruption of historic events has generated a lava-like flow of monumental change which is

dramatically redefining the world's strategic landscape. As a result, it is likewise generating a reorientation in the strategic focus of the United States' military forces. As retired General William E. Depuy so aptly stated, "the former planning assumptions associated with a bipolar world are now all up in the air."<sup>8</sup>

In a recently released draft working paper, the former Director for Strategy, Plans, and Policy of the Joint Staff characterized the shift in strategic focus in the following:

...changes in the new strategic environment point to a smaller U.S. force structure, but one that is capable of responding decisively to tomorrow's challenges. The distinguishing feature of this new strategy from the dramatically successful one of the past is one of focus. No longer will America's military establishment center its attention upon preparing for the global war which might begin in Europe. Instead the new strategy focuses our efforts on responding to regional contingencies...<sup>9</sup>

The author, General George Lee Butler, clearly indicates the principal shift in strategic focus is from the convergent vision centered on war in central Europe to a panoramic vision of the globe with a commensurate ability to respond to regional contingencies. As significantly, he reminds us of a wholly separate, yet equally dominant factor as we attempt to restructure forces to meet the demands of this new strategy. U.S. domestic political forces attempting to deal with the reality of ever-increasing budget deficits can be expected to continue facing budgetary constraints which demand further reduction in structure within the DoD.

Major efforts are already underway which demonstrate the new strategic significance of contingency forces while simultaneously recognizing demands for reduced structure. The proposed draft of the new Unified Command Plan (UCP) envisions a reduction from ten unified

and specified commands to four "forces," including the Atlantic Force, Pacific Force, Strategic Nuclear Force, and the Contingency Force.<sup>10</sup> Regardless of what eventually comes to fruition, the fact that it will be a smaller and more fiscally constrained military force, oriented towards regional contingencies, demands that, in performance, this force must demonstrate the utmost in effectiveness and efficiency.

Yet, as we attempt to reduce and restructure our military forces, adapting them to the emerging strategic vision, a degree of caution is necessary. The combined impact of the stunning changes in the world's geostrategic climate and our own recent string of highly successful contingency operations culminating with Desert Storm, has created a sense of euphoria within the United States. While justifiable in light of recent events, this euphoria is quite dangerous if allowed to be the harbinger of misplaced over-confidence resulting in what has been referred to as the "victory disease."<sup>11</sup>

None of the operations which the United States has executed since 1985 adequately describes the most demanding scenario for tomorrow's contingency. None have involved the requirement for immediate commitment of U.S. forces to combat action. None have required forced entry operations. All have allowed significant time to plan, organize, train, rehearse and otherwise prepare the force. In view of the foregoing, our new strategic focus demands that we review the true nature of contingency operations before we attempt to reduce and restructure our forces. This review is imperative if we expect to evaluate our current methodology for responding to contingency requirements with a critical eye toward improving potential effectiveness and efficiency.

### III. THE NATURE OF CONTINGENCY OPERATIONS

Demonstrating a keen knowledge of the nature of contingency operations, two officers of the XVIII Airborne Corps once offered that our former strategic focus on the Soviets could be likened to the "protective and preventative defensive measures firefighters must take against an advancing range fire." That is, it was a defense that was "deliberate, linear, designed for containment" and, I might add, "one that eventually allowed the fire to burn itself out." On the contrary, they likened the radically different approach necessary for contingency operations to that of combatting arson. To fight arson calls for "aggressive detection and prevention, rapid reaction, and a prepackaged array of firefighting tools" in order to effectively meet the unexpected.<sup>12</sup> While their analogy might be criticized as somewhat simplistic, it does offer a useful insight into the nature of the challenge inherited with our new strategic focus.

A review of the doctrinal literature concerning contingency operations reflects the low priority of that discipline in light of our former strategy. While several doctrinal publications, both joint and service specific, address the topic, none appear comprehensive. Possibly the most complete treatment is provided by Field Manual (FM) 20-100, Military Operations in Low-Intensity Conflict, yet its discussion is limited to peacetime contingency operations. While the current volume of FM 100-5, Operations, offers only a scant 3 1/2 pages on the topic, the proposed outline for the new edition of the manual indicates an entire chapter will be dedicated specifically to contingency operations. Regardless of the state of the literature, doctrine and recent history combined can be used to depict adequately

the characteristics of contingency operations and the characteristics required of contingency forces. As shall be revealed, these characteristics blend to place unique demands on the contingency force headquarters.

Probably the single most prominent characteristic of contingency operations and the crises that precipitate them is that of uncertainty. Today we may only guess at the nature of tomorrow's contingency requirement, its mission, enemy, location, environment, political implications, and constraints. In his annual budget address to the Congress in 1986, former Secretary of Defense, Casper Weinberger, summarized this challenge in the following:

Few illusions are more resilient, alluring, and dangerous than the idea that we can forecast with confidence all the threats we will face. Technicians seek certainty. But if the past is any guide to the future, it will be the unanticipated conflict in an unexpected place or form that poses the most difficult challenge.<sup>13</sup>

The Secretary's statement is no less true today. Indeed, days before the recent Iraqi invasion of Kuwait the collective wisdom of the U.S. government judged that an attack would not materialize. And who foresaw that while the U.S. was involved in Operation Desert Shield, the largest contingency operation in its history, other back-to-back contingencies would arise in Liberia and Somalia requiring the execution of two separate Noncombatant Evacuation Operations (NEO)?

This increased level of uncertainty inherent in contingency operations dilutes focus as to potential enemies and increases the demand for flexibility and adaptability. Whereas former U.S. strategy proclaimed the Soviet Union as the primary antagonist, no longer do we have the luxury to focus on one major opponent. We must emphasize a

readiness to counter a diverse range of potential opponents, in any clime or corner of the globe, who are equipped with a vast and diversified array of weapons including those of mass destruction.

Contingency operations by their very nature involve areas of vital interest to the United States and are often undertaken in "crisis avoidance" or "crisis management situations."<sup>14</sup> In the case of the former, diplomatic initiatives which require a demonstration of the political resolve to resort to force of arms may demand the immediate dispatch of a multi-service contingent with a wide range of combat capabilities. Operation Desert Shield, conducted 8 August 1990 through 15 January 1991, was, in part, an attempt to convince the Iraqi government to withdraw from Kuwait and is one such example. In crisis management situations, the application of military force is required in order to secure the policy ends which diplomacy has failed to achieve. Operation Desert Storm, which commenced 15 January 1991 and was designed to physically eject Iraqi forces from Kuwait and restore the former sovereign government, exemplifies the employment of contingency forces in crisis management scenarios.

Whether in response to crisis avoidance or crisis management, contingency operations characteristically are time-constrained events that carry a potential risk of escalation beyond the intended scope or anticipated cost, leaving little margin for error.<sup>15</sup> Additionally, because of political sensitivity, both domestic and foreign, contingency operations can be expected to involve pressure from the highest authority for quick and decisive results. "Disgust over the undeclared quagmire in Southeast Asia" embittered the American public and incensed the political leadership of Congress who passed the 1973

War Powers Resolution. Since that time, most Presidents have sought to achieve policy objectives with brief and limited operations which "avoid the constitutional question inherent in this controversial statute."<sup>16</sup>

The effect of political sensitivity and the desire for rapid and decisive results, when coupled with the advancements in modern satellite communications and computer technology, combine to create another characteristic of contingency operations. Rather subtly, FM 100-20 proclaims "command and control requirements in contingency operations are monitored at a much higher level."<sup>17</sup> Another view of this same issue was expressed in a treatise on command and control (C<sup>2</sup>) while discussing the increasing pressure toward centralization. It professed "these demands [political sensitivity and the desire for rapid, decisive results] have precipitated a greater involvement by national level decision-makers in military affairs and, in effect, subsumed the military C<sup>2</sup> process into the international political process."<sup>18</sup> While the statement from FM 100-20 probably undersells the characteristic, the latter is an obvious overstatement. Suffice it to say that modern C<sup>2</sup> capabilities which increasingly facilitate real-time analysis and decision-making in Washington equally increase the potential for excessive control during the planning and execution of contingency operations. That is not to imply that this capability will necessarily be detrimental, although it certainly has that potential, but that its impact can be significant and should be considered.

It was Vice Admiral Joseph Metcalf's knowledge of this characteristic gained from personal experience in the 1975 Operation



Frequent Wind (the helicopter evacuation of Vietnam) that led him to profess eight years later, "I don't care if we are talking about hangnails - we will put out two SITREPS every hour."<sup>19</sup> As the JTF commander of the American forces that liberated Grenada during the 1983 Operation Urgent Fury, Admiral Metcalf realized that the two situation reports hourly would occupy the Atlantic Command and JCS Staffs. These coupled with an intent message submitted to Washington by 1700 hours with his plan for the next day's activity ensured that he "continued to retain control over how the battle was to be fought." Quite often that which he had expressed as his "intention" one day would return in the form of a directive the next.<sup>20</sup>

In his discussion of the role of intelligence in war, Clausewitz offers that many "military intelligence reports in war are contradictory, even more are false, and most are uncertain."<sup>21</sup> Had he been writing about contingency operations he might have also added that "intelligence is sometimes simply unavailable." Inaccurate, incomplete, or even unavailable intelligence represents an acute and recurrent characteristic in contingency operations. In his summation regarding a study of Operation Power Pack, the 1965-66 contingency operation by the U.S. in the Dominican Republic, historian Lawrence Yates stated "that intelligence failure...could have had fatal consequences had the United States confronted a formidable conventional force or well-trained urban guerrilla." Recognizing that U.S. forces would have eventually dominated although at much greater cost, Yates declared "fortune was kind."<sup>22</sup>

Indeed, fortune has been kind in many U.S. contingency operations which have involved apparent intelligence "failures" from

the assault on the "dry hole" of Koh Tang to the complex amphibious and airborne assault on Grenada which had to be initially executed without the benefit of an adequate military map.<sup>23</sup> Yet "failure" is probably too harsh and somewhat misleading a word. It is true that collectively from national/strategic to the tactical level, weaknesses have been revealed. However, some of the so-called "failure" is endemic to the unexpected, fast-breaking, and rapidly-developing nature of crisis situations and contingency operations.

Often joint forces are alerted, marshalled, and deployed from widely separated areas by disparate means while the crisis and, therefore, the intelligence picture of it, is still emerging. Whether from insufficient planning or coordination which these circumstances engender, or from overindulgent concern for operational security, intelligence is frequently insufficiently disseminated. Lieutenant Colonel Randy Austin and his Marines from Battalion Landing Team (BLT) 2/9 would have benefitted immensely from the "vital messages known to Seventh Air Force" which accurately doubled his estimates of Khmer Rouge on Koh Tang Island.<sup>24</sup> Yet, this information along with the fact that the Mayaguez crew had already been released early during his assault phase, was only to be learned in the heat of combat.<sup>25</sup>

Finally, there is the relationship of time in contingency operations which, with compression, accentuates and exacerbates all other characteristics. Specifically, crises which demand the immediate commitment of contingency forces to combat actions, particularly where forced entry operations are required, represent the most demanding case. Distances involved and strategic lift constraints will immediately confront the National Command Authority (NCA) with a

dilemma always present in contingencies, but most pronounced in those of this nature. That is, "how much is enough versus how fast can it get there?" Reviewing this question with his advisors, President Ford found the military circumstances surrounding his options for action in the Mayaguez situation as "discouraging."<sup>26</sup> However, as opposed to waiting for the more capable Amphibious Ready Group (ARG) then steaming near Taiwan, he chose to assault the island with an ad hoc organization of Marine, Navy, and Air Force personnel. Driven by the expediency of the situation and spurred by the memory of the Pueblo incident, the President was willing to accept the potential risks.<sup>27</sup>

However, the associated increase in risk accentuated the anxiety within the NCA. The manifestation of this increased anxiety was demonstrated in the "excessive use of instant communication to direct actions that might have been better left to General Burns [officer in tactical command, (OTC), Mayaguez Rescue] and his subordinates." Fortunately, in this case, aside from some additional consternation and confusion at both ends, the excessive rudder steers from Washington were militarily insignificant.<sup>28</sup> Yet, the example clearly demonstrates the impact of time constraints which, while present in all contingency operations, are most pronounced in those which require the immediate commitment of forces to combat. For the combatant CINCs, the most demanding challenge for tomorrow's contingency will be to immediately fight a no-plan, crisis response, power projection involving forced entry against a resolute opponent armed with high technology weapons and perhaps those of mass destruction.<sup>29</sup>

Appreciation of the discussion thus far is still insufficient to support a full understanding of the nature of contingency operations.

In fact, one may easily argue that the characteristics mentioned to this point can be associated with most military operations. While valid to some extent, that argument ignores the impact that the potential for immediate commitment to combat has on the peacetime posture of the contingency forces themselves. This impact has decisive implications, particularly in the moral and cybernetic domains, and is at the very foundation of understanding the true nature of contingency operations and contingency forces.

Imagine - from the peacetime starting blocks of their dispersed garrison billets, contingency forces must sprint from a dead start into an olympic-level race of undisclosed length. They must develop and adapt their race strategy while already engaged with an opponent who, in all likelihood, is an unknown executing his own well-developed plan on a track with which he is intimately familiar. Further, the contingency team members themselves are most often strangers who have never before raced together as a team. Therefore, they will only learn each other's true mettle as the race unfolds. Lastly, there is the team captain. His abilities, style, competence, and intuition are also unknown. To him falls the task of organizing and employing his team under a race concept which must take every advantage of circumstance, race conditions, inherent team strengths, and opposing team weaknesses in order to win. To successfully compete in this environment not only requires a force which is specifically organized, trained, and equipped for such an event, but it demands a command element with superior operational acumen.

The foregoing suggests that the tempo at which events unfold in contingency operations, their increased complexity, potential for

escalation, and political sensitivity, both domestically and abroad, will place exceptional demands on the unified command element tasked to execute them. Further, the time-constrained nature of contingency operations significantly diminishes the opportunity for operational deliberation. The consequent impact of these demands dictates that the unified command element must make more effective operational decisions, more rapidly, and in less certain circumstances, than in most other military operations.

In light of the above, the contingency force commander and his staff must possess a number of characteristics. While these characteristics cannot be described as unique to the command element of a contingency force, their well-developed presence upfront is essential. In the "come as you are" business of contingency operations, the unified command element must demonstrate the utmost in operational-level, functional performance if it is to "seek victory from the situation and...not demand it from subordinates."<sup>30</sup>

Joint Chiefs of Staff Publication (JCS PUB) O-2, Unified Action Armed Forces (UNAAF), describes five essential characteristics which represent baseline requirements for all unified command elements. These include unity of effort, centralized direction, decentralized execution, common doctrine, and interoperability.<sup>31</sup> There is absolutely no question that all of these characteristics are essential to effective and efficient command and control, yet alone they are insufficient to meet the exceptional demands of contingency operations particularly where immediate commitment to combat is required. Further definition is necessary.

First, the unified command element of a contingency force must consist of a cohesive team of seasoned and qualified staff officers.<sup>32</sup> Each of these officers must be expert in his own field and in his knowledge of joint and his own service warfighting doctrine. Additionally, these officers should be keenly aware of the operational concepts which underlie the warfighting doctrine of the other components and must be well-schooled in the challenges of joint operations. Furthermore, they must demonstrate an ability and desire to rise above parochialism and bias and develop a cohesive "joint think" predicated on shared values and outlooks.<sup>33</sup> This emphasis on cohesion recognizes the distinct human element of operational effectiveness where the "personal and professional relationships between officers of different services provides the institutional and psychological underpinnings for integrated action."<sup>34</sup> Thus, it provides the foundation for securing unity of effort.

Secondly, the unified command element of a contingency force must possess a superior command process which accommodates diminished time, increased fog, friction, and uncertainty. Manifestations of this command process include well-developed battlestaff procedures which provide agility in reacting to unanticipated changes, and a more effective and efficient decision cycle which gains time for the operational commander. This requirement for a superior command process stands in recognition of the fact that "command procedures can be an asset or a liability in combat effectiveness."<sup>35</sup> Additionally, a more effective command process consumes less time. "Any measure which provides a time advantage is of inestimable value" particularly in contingency operations where time is always an issue.<sup>36</sup>

Third, the unified command element of a contingency force should possess and exploit the uniquely human capability to communicate implicitly. This superior method of communication relies on "mutual understanding, using a minimum of key words, well-understood phrases, or even anticipation of each other's thoughts" and is a vastly more effective and efficient means of communicating "than through the use of detailed, explicit instructions."<sup>37</sup> Effective implicit communication is inherently faster, and represents another means by which the unified command element can save time.

Finally, the political demands for rapid and decisive results exacerbated by inherent adverse operational circumstances (e.g., extended lines of communication, requirement for simultaneous deployment/employment, etc.) will mandate that the contingency force commander and his staff place significant reliance on the operational art.<sup>38</sup> Increased emphasis on guile, cunning, artifice, maneuver, and the indirect approach must be employed in order to rapidly achieve moral ascendancy, bringing success in the shortest time possible with the least expenditure of lives and resources. Initiative at all levels must be maintained and attrition-oriented concepts must be avoided.

These additional elements coupled with those identified in the UNAAF collectively define the characteristics required of the unified command element tasked to execute a contingency operation. The degree to which they are present will determine the effectiveness and efficiency of the command and control provided by the commander and his staff to the contingency force. This is not to imply that the operational performance of the command element is the most significant determinant of success or failure in contingency operations. To the

contrary, it is only a piece of the total force, and as suggested by many, it is the appropriateness of that total force to the mission "which ultimately provides a more reliable index of success."<sup>39</sup>

Nonetheless, the role of the command element, particularly in contingency operations, is often decisive. As John Shy reminds us in his study of America's first battles:

...here it can be said with some confidence that in only a few instances did adequately prepared troops fall apart before undergoing severe stress.... More glaringly than poorly trained troops as a first battle problem is the weakness of command and control.<sup>40</sup>

In a world where contingency operations are to represent the norm, we must ensure that we have adequately organized, trained, and equipped a unified contingency force that is prepared for the immediate commitment to combat action. Wherever or whenever it occurs, tomorrow's "first battle" may very well represent the only battle in the next regional crisis.

Yet, as we look at the joint "force of choice" for contingency operations, the extemporaneously formed Joint Task Force (JTF), what judgements can be made concerning its potential for effective and efficient execution of tomorrow's contingency mission? Lieutenant General John H. Cushman suggests to "look at the effectiveness of a nation's political-military institutions in terms of their ability to have already put into place appropriate military capabilities at the time those capabilities are needed."<sup>41</sup> However, with specific regard to the JTF, I am fairly certain that the following is irrefutable - you cannot measure the effectiveness of an organization which does not yet exist!



Equally unassailable, however, that assertion does nothing to substantiate that the current method of forming a JTF by invitation coincidental to the outbreak of a crisis produces a less effective or efficient organization. For is it not true that all its potential components--divisions or corps, wings or air forces, battle groups or fleets--do, in fact, already exist as cohesive, well-trained units? Among all the potential elements in a JTF, there really is only one that can be characterized as truly transient--the command element. As we adapt our military forces to a new strategic orientation and a fiscally constrained environment, it appears relevant to question whether the utmost in effective and efficient command and control for tomorrow's "first battle" can be provided by a transient JTF headquarters that does not exist today.

#### IV. INSIGHTS FROM THEORY ON OPERATIONAL PERFORMANCE IN THE JOINT TASK FORCE HEADQUARTERS

To be valid, an analysis of the transient JTF headquarters must evaluate its potential effectiveness and efficiency in terms of operational-level, functional performance. Certainly the discussion on the nature of contingency operations established that the operational level of war is the primary domain of the JTF headquarters as it is tasked to design and implement simultaneous and sequential tactical actions which must achieve strategic results. However, the practical aspects of conducting an analysis at the operational level is not without some significant challenges.

First, the literature concerning the operational level of war is devoted entirely either to heralding its significance, justifying its existence, or defining its characteristics. Nowhere does it provide

criteria or model which define operational-level, functional performance or its major components, operational effectiveness and operational efficiency. Secondly, and explicitly related to this study, even suitable criteria which may serve to highlight operational-level dysfunction will be insufficient to support a final determination regarding the need to establish a standing JTF headquarters for contingency operations. Additional criteria is needed in order to establish whether dysfunctional performance, once highlighted, can be attributed to the extemporaneous formation of a JTF headquarters. The deficiency in the literature and the dictates of this study mandate that some attention be devoted toward suggesting these criteria.

Intuitively, one may suggest that victory is an adequate determinant of operational-level, functional performance. While this distinction certainly provides a discriminator between acceptable and unacceptable military results, as a criterion it offers little to suggest how to improve evidence of dysfunction. Reviewing the track record of U.S. military operations in the last half of this century, General William E. Depuy remarked:

The criteria for victory seem to tell us that success is defined as the attainment of the political objectives in a reasonable time, at a bearable cost, and with public support to the end.<sup>42</sup>

While still much too broad to be of analytical value, the criteria suggested by General Depuy guide us in an appropriate direction and adds a sense of proportionality between political objective, associated cost and time, and the impact on national will. These elements should

be appropriately reflected in any valid criteria of operational-level, functional performance.

Robert C. Fried validates effectiveness and efficiency as the major components of functional performance in any organization.<sup>43</sup> Yet, "despite a sizable theoretical literature," organizational efficiency and effectiveness in military forces "remain ill-defined concepts."<sup>44</sup> Organization theory in general offers two approaches to evaluating functional performance in organizations. The first method focuses on the social structure and the related human aspects. The other is an operational approach which emphasizes the significance of a unifying doctrine, operational concepts, and systems employment. Each of these approaches merits some attention.

The social scientist evaluates military effectiveness and efficiency through a study of the social structure as it impacts in the moral and cybernetic domains, focusing on such things as cohesion, group solidarity, small unit leadership, esprit, and the will to fight.<sup>45</sup> While this approach offers much, it is incomplete in that it excludes any in-depth discussion of elements which impact primarily in the physical domain (e.g., firepower, mobility, etc.). Additionally, many, if not most of the factors are psychological in nature and, therefore, are subjective and difficult to measure.<sup>46</sup>

Clausewitz summed up this difficulty in a discussion of moral forces in battle which concluded that they "will not yield to academic wisdom, they cannot be classified or counted, they must be seen or felt."<sup>47</sup> Admiral Hyman Rickover offered a more contemporary and contemptuous view of the same issue when he exclaimed "I have no more faith in the ability of the social scientist to quantify military

effectiveness than I do in numerologists to calculate the future."<sup>48</sup> On the other hand, a purely operational approach which "emphasizes the importance of doctrine and systems, and their proper utilization on the battlefield"<sup>49</sup> is no more complete. While such an approach can be utilized to objectively evaluate and quantify much that occurs in the physical domain, and to a lesser extent cybernetic notions, it remains incapable of sufficiently accounting for moral forces.

Nonetheless, between the two stools of the social scientist and the operational or systems analyst, the military practitioner must define some criteria which can be used to evaluate functional performance at the operational level of war. The first step toward solving this dilemma could be to define operational-level, functional performance by expressing its elements, effectiveness and efficiency, in terms of accepted characteristics and concepts currently associated with the operational art. This would obviously represent the systems approach stressing integrative action, doctrine, and optimal employment, yet it would be sufficient to highlight dysfunction even though it would be incapable of identifying causative factors of that dysfunction resulting from moral forces. Following this approach suggests that:

Operational-level, Functional Performance =

Operational Effectiveness + Operational Efficiency

Where Operational Effectiveness = The ability to design, direct execution, and subsequently modify according to chance and circumstance a plan of campaign which:

- o Optimally integrates all components for simultaneous and sequential tactical employment allowing any component to

- predominate while ensuring none are in opposition, gaining maximum synergism.
- o Sets favorable conditions for force employment exploiting all factors moral, physical and cybernetic.
  - o Demonstrates mastery of current doctrine yet adapts it to account for the latest technology, the dictates of the operational environment, and the nature of the opponent.
  - o Successfully attains the strategic intent without violating constraints, restraints, or escalating the situation beyond intended scope.

And Operational Efficiency = The capacity to achieve the strategic intent prior to culmination by artfully combining resources with potential courses of action while:

- o Minimizing resource expenditure (particularly time and human lives).
- o Protecting the force to garner its morale and confidence.
- o Maintaining political confidence and public support.

The strengths of these criteria should be relatively obvious. First and foremost, the criteria go far beyond the suggestion that success is the only adequate determinant of operational-level, functional performance. Secondly, they incorporate the sense of proportionality among attainment of the strategic aim, associated cost and time, and their relational impact on national will as suggested by General Depuy. This is particularly important with respect to the contemporary views of American society regarding the use of military force. Next, the criteria is definitive enough that it can support judgments which highlight specific evidence of dysfunction around which corrective measures either to doctrine, organization, or operational procedures can be designed. Finally, the criteria represent at least a point of departure for addressing a current deficiency in the body of literature concerning the operational level of war. Going beyond the

extensive writings which herald the significance, justify the existence, or define the characteristics of the operational level, the criteria suggest a framework by which the functional performance of military organizations with operational level responsibilities can be evaluated.

Whether these criteria have universal merit is certainly subject to debate. However, with specific regard to the analysis at hand, they appear sufficient as a standard in evaluating the functional performance of JTF headquarters which were formed coincidental to the contingencies of the recent past. In that the criteria may be used to highlight evidence of dysfunction at the operational level, they answer the first challenge encountered in this analysis.

With regard to the second challenge, it would seem necessary to select criteria which place greater emphasis on cybernetic and moral factors to determine if evidence of operational-level dysfunction can be attributed to the transient nature of the JTF headquarters. This focus seems justifiable in that we may assume whether standing or transient, at least theoretically, a JTF headquarters would have the same table of organization and equipment. Thus, the determinant would become the amount of time the personnel are associated with one another, with consequent impact on functional performance within the organization. Selected elements among those which earlier discussion proposed as essential characteristics demanded of contingency force headquarters suggest such criteria. These would include unity of effort, cohesion, implicit communication, and a superior command process. Furthermore, additional theoretical discussions of some of these criteria raise some suspicions concerning the reliability of the

current methodology of forming the JTF headquarters. Later historical analysis can be focused in these areas to confirm or deny these suspicions.

If we analyze the "superior command process" criterion, decision-making theory offers several precepts which give cause for concern regarding the transient JTF headquarters. For example, it has been suggested that a newly arrived commander in any organization has the following three concerns with regard to establishing an appropriate C<sup>2</sup> process:

- (1) Whether he has made adequate provisions so that he will be informed of operationally significant events.

- (2) Whether he and his staff will be able to cope with the information received and transform it into timely and sensible decisions.

- (3) Whether the directives that reflect his decisions will be received by subordinates in time to affect the outcome of the operation.<sup>50</sup>

Reading the above, one begins to draw a mental balance sheet comparing a standing versus a transient JTF headquarters. It would seem self-evident that a standing JTF faces and solves these questions during peacetime, while the transient JTF is forced to deal with these issues simultaneously with the exceptional demands of the contingency situation. Continue with your own mental balance sheet as the review of organization and decision-making theories proceeds.

As a commander continues to establish his command process and then employ it in execution of his assigned responsibilities, the decisions which he must make can be grouped into three categories. These include organizational, informational and operational decisions defined as follows:

- (1) Organizational decisions - those which establish the structure internal to the headquarters and the force

for the flow of information, reports and orders as well as the intermediate processing of information.

(2) Information decisions - those which determine what kinds of information the commander desires [e.g., ccir, etc.] and who and how it should be provided.

(3) Operational decisions - concerns the employment of the force - seeks to answer "What shall I do?"<sup>51</sup>

These categories of decisions raise some additional concerns. First, it seems logical to assume that many informational and organizational decisions will have already been confronted, decisioned, validated or adjusted, and internalized in a standing headquarters. Secondly, commanders about to make organizational decisions must take into account the capabilities and limitations of individual staff members.<sup>52</sup> Borrowing from S.L.A. Marshall, commanders in standing headquarters are dealing with "known soldiers."<sup>53</sup> Not so in the transient organization. Finally, the command, control, and communication (C<sup>3</sup>) system and the staff should be molded to the personality and leadership style of the commander in order to function with minimum friction.<sup>54</sup> This is a time intensive process requiring "enormous amounts of adaptive energy...with an inevitable loss in momentum and direction while taking place."<sup>55</sup> "Personalizing" the C<sup>3</sup> system is accomplished during peacetime in a standing JTF; during the "heat of battle" in transient JTF headquarters.

Regarding the "cohesion" criterion, it has been said that "the glue that makes a cohesive bond is more in the realm of speculation than scientific surety."<sup>56</sup> Yet, that it exists and that its presence in warfare has been decisive is undeniable. Specifically, it can be defined as "the ability of a military organization to hold together and to sustain mission effectiveness despite combat stress."<sup>57</sup> Most agree that cohesion is slowly bred through close, continuous personal



relations, common purpose, and common shared experience.<sup>58</sup> This, rather obviously, makes time a determinant in developing cohesion. Since cohesion has already been established as essential for unity of effort, providing the "underpinnings for integrated action" among joint officers, we may question how it is achieved in the requisite magnitude in the transient JTF headquarters.<sup>59</sup>

Closely related, in many regards, to cohesion is the criterion of "implicit communication." Among all characteristics, the ability of personnel within an organization to employ implicit communication best connotes a higher order of organizational development. Much like cohesion, implicit communication is achieved over time and predicated on shared experience and close personal association. Further, it requires a common doctrine (implies common approach to similar problems and common language) and a shared philosophy.<sup>60</sup> As previously discussed, it is a superior method of communication because it is much faster and much more effective. However, its presence, to some degree, is essential in all organizations as demonstrated by the following:

But a decision is not necessarily a decision faithfully communicated or clearly understood, unless a great effort has been made to create previously the shared understanding that makes communication effective.<sup>61</sup>

One might question what "previous" opportunity means in relation to a transient JTF headquarters.

A couple of other precepts from organization theory seem germane to the analysis. First, confidence within an organization is achieved in time "as is building the competence from which confidence is derived."<sup>62</sup> To secure either, an organization requires stability and an opportunity to train according to its doctrine, evaluate its

performance against some criteria, internalize the lessons of experience, and then repeat the process, again and again.<sup>63</sup> We may rightfully question when and how many times this process can occur during peacetime training for the transient JTF headquarters.

The second observation relates to the following quote from Sir General Ian Hamilton:

The primary object of an organization is to shield people from unexpected calls upon their powers of adaptability, judgement and decision.<sup>64</sup>

While somewhat of an exaggeration, the quote nonetheless highlights the true strength of a tried and tested organization which has seasoned with experience in practice of its mission. Its personnel have encountered the problems, struggled with the challenges, failed, adapted, improvised, overcome and eventually achieved success or failed and were dismissed for the betterment of the organization on whole. Through this evolution, what was "unexpected" becomes internalized as "routine" and "business as usual," so that when the "truly exceptional" arrives it is met with an unmitigated air of confidence anchored by past successes and viewed as merely another chance to demonstrate the organization's mettle.

Much of what the JTF headquarters encounters with contingency operations remains similar and should be "routine" and "business as usual." However, every contingency is unique and each will present something "truly exceptional." Armed with an appreciation of the demands placed on a JTF headquarters and provided with a standard to evaluate functional performance at the operational level of war, we are now equipped to evaluate the performance of the transient JTF's in recent history.

## V. RESULTS IN RECENT HISTORY

In meeting contingencies, expeditionary units operate in a chaotic world of deadly danger, physical exhaustion, false and misleading intelligence, and Murphy's Law, all exacerbated by a rapid descent into the soup.<sup>65</sup>

In his review of what he terms "U.S. expeditionary operations" between 1975 and 1986, the author of the above quote, U.S. Army Major Daniel P. Bolger, exclaimed that "the seven U.S. expeditions since the evacuation of Saigon have resulted in five successes and two failures."<sup>66</sup> Updating Bolger's figures, we might claim that the count remains only two failures, but now an impressive ten successes.<sup>67</sup> This might lead the casual observer of U.S. military affairs to conclude that we have become much more adept at "swimming in the soup!"

While there can be no doubt that the performance of U.S. forces in joint operations continues to improve, it is dangerous to believe that we have solved all the systemic problems targeted by Goldwaters/Nichols. Of all the contingency operations conducted by the U.S. since 1975, only two approach the most demanding case for tomorrow's contingency as described earlier. Only the operations to rescue the crew of the Mayaguez and to liberate the island of Grenada demanded the immediate commitment of U.S. forces directly from their peacetime starting blocks to the intense heat of combat. All other contingency operations which ultimately involved combat action were preceded by extensive time for planning, organizing, training, rehearsing, deploying and otherwise preparing the force.

Imagine where we might be today in the recently completed operations in Southwest Asia had the circumstances not allowed six

months of slow-building "crisis avoidance" where diplomatic initiatives were emphasized in a vain attempt to convince the Iraqis to withdraw from Kuwait while we continued to expand forces in theater. Consider the months that were given to the forces that would eventually conduct the coup de main in Panama which allowed extensive opportunity to integrate, rehearse and prepare the force. In these instances, the term "transient" is simply not applicable to the unified command elements which were allowed significant time to encounter problems, devise and validate solutions, and then internalize them as "procedural" prior to the initiation of hostilities. Invaluable as studies in their own respect, these contingencies validate much of our current doctrine when challenged with "slow-building" or "fast rising" crisis situations.<sup>68</sup> However, their lessons are not directly transferable to crisis situations which have already reached the "imminent conflict" or "conflict" stage, and therefore, require contingency forces to go directly in harm's way from the outset. For these reasons, further discussion of those contingencies which did not involve the immediate commitment of U.S. forces to combat is excluded from this study.

As we focus attention on the issues at Koh Tang and Grenada, the intention is not to recount the explicit details of those operations nor to summarily describe all of their shortcomings. Numerous historical accounts have already covered this ground. The intent of this writing is merely to highlight selective evidence of operational dysfunction by utilizing the earlier established criteria. From that point, judgments can be made to determine if the evidence of

dysfunction is attributable to the transient nature of the JTF headquarters.

Finally, we must remember that the opponents in these contingencies were neither significant in size nor capability. Each brought a very limited arsenal of weaponry to the conflict, considering what was potentially available. Include in the enemy ground order of battle any small number of surface to air missiles, anti-ship missiles, or even a few tanks and refight those engagements. In a manner much like Yates declared of our good fortune in the Dominican Republic, we assuredly would prevail under those circumstances, but at a much greater cost. And yet, even against less formidable opponents, consider the functional performance at the operational level of those transient unified command elements tasked to execute these two operations. That they were successful, there can be no doubt. But what judgments can be made concerning their operational effectiveness and efficiency?

Several observations can be made regarding the ability of these headquarters to optimally integrate the component forces at their disposal. For example both contingencies suffered operationally because of key intelligence shortfalls concerning the precise locations of the personnel they were assigned to liberate and specific knowledge concerning enemy dispositions. However, with a few minor and operationally insignificant exceptions, neither operational commander planned or conducted pre-assault intelligence gathering missions with ground tactical reconnaissance elements.<sup>69</sup> In effect, they attempted to execute a hostage rescue "in the blind." Anyone who has ever trained in these admittedly difficult rescue operations would confirm

that such missions are nearly impossible without continuous "eyes on the target." Yet, both commanders had specially trained units at their disposal which could have been "integrated" into the force to find the noncombatants and to provide precise information concerning the enemy dispositions.

Additionally, although there were to be coalition forces involved in Grenada "there was no combined U.S.-Caribbean planning and the role of the Caribbean contingent was never clear to the subordinate commanders."<sup>70</sup> That this did not create significant problems can be attributed to the fact that significant and sustained resistance was not encountered. However, the potential for disaster was present, as evident in the remarks of a Ranger Battalion Commander at Salinas Airfield. Watching Caribbean troops deplane he exclaimed that "he knew nothing of their participation in the operation at all and for a brief moment, thought that they were PRA."<sup>71</sup> These examples certainly portray something less than the utmost in operational effectiveness and are clear evidence of a certain level of operational dysfunction within the command elements.

Furthermore, it does not appear that either operational commander was particularly aggressive in seeking to establish favorable conditions for the tactical employment of the forces at his disposal. To the contrary, one might even conclude that the operational commanders sought victory from their subordinates by relying on some false "ethnocentric notion of military superiority that assumes an automatic preeminence" over third world opponents.<sup>72</sup> In the case of Grenada, Admiral Metcalf's comment that "I would not say we were overconfident, but there was a distinct air of bravado"<sup>73</sup> portrays a

sense of superiority which may have fostered a less aggressive approach toward the establishment of favorable tactical circumstance. The disinclination of the operational commanders to aggressively employ tactical reconnaissance elements at their disposal to obtain the necessary intelligence is but one example of this failure.

The ill-conceived plan adopted for the rescue of the Mayaguez crew further exemplifies failure of the operational commander to establish favorable tactical conditions for force employment. Despite the fact that at 100 percent availability (never a sound planning factor), the Air Force could only deliver 180 Marines of a 430 Marine assault force to Koh Tang, General Burns recommended this course of action to Pacific Command for approval.<sup>74</sup> The real travesty was that General Burns had already been authorized the use of an Amphibious Ready Group (ARG) with an entire Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU) embarked which could have been on-station at Koh Tang only twenty-four hours beyond the actual H-hour of the intended "ad hoc" assault force.<sup>75</sup> As opposed to fervently recommending a twenty-four hour delay, the Air Force General recommended what should have been recognized as a tactically infeasible course of action. The insufficient number of Air Force helicopters and the flight distance from Thailand to Koh Tang made it impossible to achieve the rapid buildup of combat power so essential in vertical assault operations. At best case, there would be a 4 1/2 hour turnaround between waves.<sup>76</sup> The results should have been obvious. The force was employed at a significant tactical disadvantage. It was unnecessarily "hung out on a limb" by an operational commander with no means at his disposal to rapidly reinforce or extract the force as might be

required. This failure to create a tactically advantageous situation and failure to ensure adequate force protection provides hard evidence of operational-level dysfunction.

There is also evidence of what could be described as a general lack of knowledge of joint and service specific doctrine present within the command elements of both contingency forces. By his own assertion, Admiral Metcalf stated that he "had reservations about certain high-risk aspects of the plan [for Urgent Fury], particularly those involving Rangers parachuting at night."<sup>77</sup> At face value, this would seem no more than prudent concern on the part of a seasoned commander. Yet, he continues by stating that his concern was diffused after some people of experience "persuaded me that Rangers really could execute a night parachute drop."<sup>78</sup> As opposed to prudent concern over a somewhat risky operation, Admiral Metcalf's comments demonstrate a clear lack of knowledge concerning what is a well-known Ranger capability and "routine" vice "exceptional" mission tasking for a Ranger Battalion.

Other examples from Urgent Fury demonstrate that a lack of knowledge concerning joint and service specific doctrine "permeated the planning, execution, and after-action assessment of the operation."<sup>79</sup> Admiral Metcalf's headquarters failed to publish an initiating directive for the amphibious phase of Urgent Fury which would have designated the Commander, Amphibious Task Force (CATF) and identified his Amphibious Objective Area (AOA). Definition of these doctrinal elements could have been utilized to simplify a number of problems such as airspace coordination. Failure to employ these long-standing doctrinal precepts or other suitable doctrinal



alternatives such as designation of a Joint Force Air Component Commander (JFACC) created significant problems in air command and control and demonstrated "a lack of knowledge, failure to follow existing procedures, and a lack of experience in operating in a joint environment" within the JTF 120 headquarters.<sup>80</sup>

Many other examples of operational ineffectiveness and operational inefficiency could be made to offer evidence of operational dysfunction among these two transient command elements. However, the examples rendered thus far are sufficient to validate that in both instances the transient headquarters exemplified deficiencies in operational-level, functional performance. That none of the deficiencies proved fatal is probably attributable to the relatively small size of the opposition, their lack of sophisticated weapons, and blind luck. In any case, it is now appropriate to determine if the evidence of dysfunction can be attributed to the transient nature of the command elements involved.

Knowing that Urgent Fury, an operation that would eventually involve some twenty thousand personnel from all services, was "conceived, planned, and launched in four days,"<sup>81</sup> it is instructive to view the situation from the outset as seen through the eyes of the operational commander, Admiral Joseph Metcalf, III. At the time he was officially notified that he was to command the forces in Grenada, the scheduled H-hour was a mere thirty-nine hours away.<sup>82</sup> Looking back on this period some months later, Metcalf referred to this critically short period as his "thirty-nine hours" and reflected that the decisions he faced during this time could be broken down into three "stages." The questions or "challenges" he faced in the first stage

are not unique and represent concerns any operational commander would face regardless of whether his command element was permanently manned or only recently "stood up." These first stage questions included the following:

- o What is the mission?
- o What is the plan?
- o Is the plan executable?
- o What forces are assigned?
- o What are the rules of engagement?<sup>83</sup>

However, of the nine questions or "challenges" confronted in the second and third stages of his "thirty-nine hours," no less than five related to either organizational or informational decisions including:

- o What is the command and control structure?
- o What staff is needed? Where will it come from?
- o What staff augmentation is needed?
- o Who constitutes the tactical decision team?
- o How will the staff run the operation?<sup>84</sup>

What is significant to note here is that, just as theory suggested, Admiral Metcalf had to devote time and attention to confront, evaluate, and decide issues which he would have long since confronted and validated had JTF 120 been a permanent headquarters.

While it is impossible to determine through research just how much time was devoted to deciding these issues, a couple of points should be made. First, of the entire JTF 120 headquarters that eventually formed, Admiral Metcalf had personal knowledge of the capabilities and competence of only the sixteen officers that he brought with him from his Second Fleet headquarters.<sup>85</sup> All of the rest, including his eventual Deputy Commander, Major General H. N. Schwartzkopf, were "unknown" soldiers. Next, his own view that "my first important and perhaps key decision was the organization of the Commander Task Force 120 staff"<sup>86</sup> reflects that he viewed these

decisions as significant and probably gave them considerable attention (and time) as a result. Although impossible to determine the impact, it is clear that time and mental attention spent here detracted from that available for more critical operational deliberations. Finally, no matter what specific decisions were made regarding these questions, there was no peacetime training opportunity to validate them and then train the staff to function as a well-oiled machine. Anyone who has ever participated in the command estimate process with an unknown commander and among other unknown staff officers is intimately familiar with the challenges encountered. In the same light, anyone who has been through the process repetitively with the same commander and staff can attest to the general increase in the staff's ability to produce sound timely recommendations to the commander and then generate clear, precise orders based on his decisions.

The process of "personalizing" the staff and the C<sup>3</sup> system was particularly challenging during Urgent Fury. First, the operation required the staff to conduct an immediate fly-away to embark at sea aboard the designated flagship, the helicopter transport Guam.<sup>87</sup> Not only did this place most Army and Air Force staff personnel in an extremely unfamiliar environment, but the inadequate space and communications suite aboard the ship further exacerbated the establishment of an efficient C<sup>2</sup> process and severely stressed an unfamiliar C<sup>3</sup> system. These circumstances were certainly not "routine" or "business as usual." In fact, for a newly formed staff where most officers had never before worked together,<sup>88</sup> this represented a "truly exceptional" challenge.

Yet, should not all of the above have been viewed as "business as usual" and "routine?" How much time and mental energy did the command element have to expend in this process? The fact that it had to be accomplished at all is not at question. What is questionable, however, is could it have been accomplished more effectively and efficiently by an organization which had trained in peacetime for this type of situation?

In reality, Metcalf and his staff were provided no training opportunity, no time to refine their command estimate process, verify that the assigned personnel possessed the requisite skills, "personalize" the C<sup>3</sup> system, or validate the organizational and informational decisions which had been made on the spur of the moment. The crucible of combat was to be the first and only test. Not surprisingly, the "audit by fire" quickly uncovered flaws in the organizational decisions of Metcalf. Evidence of one such flaw is seen in the insufficient number of staff officers "who understood how to plan and coordinate joint fire support for ground forces on the island" and were integrated into the staff. This particular organizational oversight was "much regretted later in the operation."<sup>89</sup> All of the above combined to produce a C<sup>2</sup> process that would have to be characterized as something less than the "superior" rating demanded to achieve the utmost in operational effectiveness and efficiency.

It should be no surprise that Admiral Metcalf's staff initially lacked "the glue that makes a cohesive bond," for only one of three essential components necessary for cohesion was present.<sup>90</sup> There is no doubt that all the members hastily organized into the JTF headquarters were imbued with a common purpose. That in itself

provided the basis for establishing a cohesive team. But the other two elements which make cohesion and related attributes like implicit communication a reality in military organizations--close personal relations and common-shared experience--could only be gained over time. Had the task that demanded the formation of JTF 120 not required the immediate commitment of forces to combat, additional time would have been available to build a cohesive team. Unfortunately, the dictates of the situation required that the close personal relations and common-shared experience required for the development of cohesion had to be acquired coincidental to the demands of combat. Admiral Metcalf himself was intimately aware of the problems this presented. In his after-action review of Urgent Fury he remarked that one of the real lessons of Grenada was not that the joint command system worked, but that if it was expected to work well the commander "must have a trained staff that has previously worked together."<sup>91</sup>

A 1985 Congressional study found that the operational deficiencies evident during the incursion into Grenada were largely the result of "failure to adequately implement the concept of unified command."<sup>92</sup> Much of the blame for the consequent failure to attain unity of effort must be laid at the feet of the operational commander. Admiral Metcalf demonstrated through his own actions a lack of knowledge and experience in the employment considerations for his component forces, particularly the land components. The incident involving his consternation over the night parachute assault at Salinas by the Rangers is but one example.

More significantly, in a misdirected attempt to employ a decentralized command philosophy, he gave excessive license to

component commanders, leaving operationally significant decisions to them. For example, Metcalf did not specify to the Commanding General (CG) of the 82nd Airborne Division what size the operational reserve was to be. On the contrary, he left the decision open-ended for the CG to decide. The result of this well-meaning, but operationally naive action served to create disunity within the force. The 82nd Airborne Division ended up with over 5000 combat troops on the island, but severely interrupted the logistics flow of other essentials in order to get them there.<sup>93</sup> It is difficult to imagine that an operational commander who had even once experienced the problems created when components are allowed to plan and execute in isolation would allow this to occur again. But that kind of experience is also difficult to obtain in a transient headquarters except while executing an actual contingency where the lesson may come much too late, as it did for Admiral Metcalf.

Some rather pertinent and useful comments to the analysis at hand were made in a comparative study of Operations Urgent Fury and Earnest Will by a naval officer who participated in both. First, he mentioned that in the Persian Gulf "prior to the start of convoys, the Commander, Mideastern Forces used his time to overcome interoperability and intelligence problems over several months."<sup>94</sup> Secondly, he stated that, compared to Grenada, "the most significant enhancement during the Persian Gulf operations was the presence of a highly proficient, knowledgeable staff."<sup>95</sup> He concluded by stating that the presence of this highly proficient, unified staff "made inputs to contingency planning exceptionally effective and forces were thus employed in an integrated, unified team."<sup>96</sup>

The comments suggest that an essential key to successful contingency operations is the presence of a knowledgeable and highly proficient unified command element. More importantly the comments reflect that, given time, a transient JTF created for a specific contingency can develop the proficiency necessary to effectively employ an integrated, unified team. From the foregoing, it would seem logical to conclude that when time is critical, as when forces must be immediately committed to combat action, then the knowledgeable and proficient headquarters had better already exist.

## VI. CONCLUSION

The joint task force is a transient. Even when it is occasionally brought together, the JTF commander is insulated from his forces by service-component walls. The influence of battlefield leadership is at best fleeting. The commander's style appears unimportant and C<sup>2</sup> is seen as primarily a technical matter. Joint operations come across as a bloodless process utterly lacking vitality - a management problem. If the U.S. military institutions do not correct this underlying deficiency in joint C<sup>2</sup>, our nation will surely suffer when, someday it seeks to employ a true all-service force in a highly demanding situation. A new look, even an overhaul is very much in order.<sup>97</sup>

As discussed in the last two sections, theory suggests and history confirmed that, in part, evidence of operational dysfunction is specifically related to the transient nature of a JTF headquarters when that headquarters must be immediately committed to combat operations. First, the review of recent history indicates that in contingencies which require the immediate commitment of forces to combat, the command and control process is not sufficiently established to provide the utmost in effective and efficient C<sup>2</sup>. As a matter of fact, it is significantly hampered by the need to first make organizational and

information decisions. Furthermore, the discussions demonstrate that the "personalization" of the staff and C<sup>3</sup> system is a time-intensive process which requires tremendous adaptive energy and produces a subsequent loss in command momentum.

Secondly, the relative unfamiliarity of the individual staff members meant that cohesion and the related notion of implicit communication were almost nonexistent at the outset. Only sixteen of the officers on Admiral Metcalf's staff were known to him and each other. All others were complete strangers, many inside the unfamiliar gray steel plates of a Navy ship for the first time. This meant that cohesion and the ability to communicate implicitly were only to be developed in time, and coincident with the combat operations that they ideally should have facilitated.

Next, history demonstrates that unity of effort is sacrificed by a commander who grants excessive license to subordinate tactical commanders, relinquishing decisions which were appropriately only his to make. Whether through a lack of knowledge of component warfighting doctrine or because of an unfamiliarity with the nature of the operation, granting excessive latitude demonstrates a lack of operational acumen which is so necessary in the fast-breaking nature of contingency operations. Further, it perpetuates the tendency of a component commander to make a decision which, while tactically expedient for his component, operationally is in disharmony with higher concepts, destroying any chance for maximum synergism.

Finally, the discussion highlights that much of what occurs in contingency operations is repetitious. All such operations are characterized by rapid marshalling, deployment, and employment. The



command element should be designed to pick up, deploy quickly with appropriate communications, and establish an efficient C<sup>3</sup> facility in any kind of environment--seaborne, airborne, and ground based, mobile or stationary. These things should all be considered "business as usual" supported by well-defined internal procedures so that time and mental energy is reserved for "truly exceptional" challenges. But the review of recent history unequivocally demonstrates that these "routine" characteristics can take on an all-encompassing life of their own in an organization which has never encountered, pondered, implemented, validated and internalized the lessons of these routine challenges.

The results of this study strongly support the contention that in order to provide the utmost in operationally effective and efficient command and control for contingencies which require the immediate commitment of forces to combat, the combatant CINCs of the U.S. require standing joint task force headquarters. This should not be visualized, however, as a new requirement. In fact, our performance in contingency operations, when viewed over the past forty-six years, could probably have led one to a similar conclusion. What is new, however, is a strategic focus which no longer places contingency response somewhere down the list of priorities. While our former strategic focus didn't allow for a higher priority with regard to contingency operations, our new focus demands it.

## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> John H. Cushman, "Command and Control of Theater Forces: The Korean Command and Other Cases," (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Press, 1985), 5-71.

<sup>2</sup> James A. Blackwell, Jr., and Barry M. Blechman, "Making Defense Reform Work," in Making Defense Reform Work (Washington, D.C.: Brassey's (U.S.), Inc., 1990), 260-261.

<sup>3</sup> J. L. Black, Origins, Evolution, and Nature of the Cold War (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC CLIO, Inc., 1986), xxv.

<sup>4</sup> Albert Wohlstetter, "Half Wars and Half Policies," in W. Scott Thompson, et.al., From Weakness to Strength: National Security in the 1980's (San Francisco, CA: Transaction Books, 1980), 123-124.

<sup>5</sup> Robert P. Haffa, Jr., The Half War: Planning U.S. Rapid Deployment Forces to Meet Limited a Contingency, 1960-1983 (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1984), 1-4.

<sup>6</sup> Admiral James D. Watkins, "The Maritime Strategy," in James A. Bardor, executive director The Maritime Strategy (Annapolis, MD: U.S. Naval Institute Press, 1986), 5.

<sup>7</sup> General George Lee Butler, USAF, "United States Military Strategy," (Unpublished Draft Working Paper, March 6, 1991), 1-2.

<sup>8</sup> William E. Depuy, "For the Joint Specialist: Five Steep Hills to Climb," Parameters, September 1989, 5.

<sup>9</sup> Butler, 7.

<sup>10</sup> William Matthews, "Reorganizations Scaled to Iraqi-Type War But Soviet Threat Lingers," in Navy Times, February 18, 1991, 9-10 and John H. Cushman, "Joint Command and Control," Military Review, July 1990, 25.

<sup>11</sup> Historian Chester Wilmot is generally credited with the coining of this phrase as he used it to describe the false sense of invincibility that the Japanese acquired from their unprecedented successes in the first six months of the Pacific War.

<sup>12</sup> Michael A. Green and Paul Tiberi, "Contingency Planning: Time for a Change," Parameters, September 1987, 36.

<sup>13</sup> Casper W. Weinberger, "Report of the Secretary of Defense to the Congress, on the FY 1987 Budget, FY 1988 Authorization Request, and FY 1987-91 Defense Programs (Washington: GPO, February 1986), 70.

- <sup>14</sup> U.S. Army Field Manual 100-20, Military Operations in Low-Intensity Conflict (Washington, D.C.: Headquarters, Department of the Army, 7 March 1989), 5-1.
- <sup>15</sup> Joint Publication 3-07, Doctrine for Joint Operations in Low Intensity Conflict (Washington, D.C. JCS, October 1990), V-1.
- <sup>16</sup> Daniel P. Bolger, Americans at War 1975-1986, An Era of Violent Peace (Novato, CA: Presidio, 1988), 12-13.
- <sup>17</sup> FM 100-20, 5-12.
- <sup>18</sup> M. W. Sanford, "Strategic and Tactical Command and Control: An Integrated Whole?" Unpublished Thesis, 1986, 28.
- <sup>19</sup> Vice Admiral Joseph Metcalf, III, "Decision Making and the Grenada Operation," Ambiguity and Command: Organizational Perspectives on Military Decision Making (Boston, MA: Pitman, 1986), 284.
- <sup>20</sup> Ibid., 285.
- <sup>21</sup> Carl von Clausewitz, On War, ed. and trans. by Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984), 117.
- <sup>22</sup> Lawrence A. Yates, Power Pack: U.S. Intervention in the Dominican Republic, 1965-1966 (Fort Leavenworth, KS: U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, 1988), 176.
- <sup>23</sup> The first reference is to the attempted rescue of the Mayaguez crew 15 May 1975. The term "dry hole" is frequently used in hostage rescue operations in reference to suspected hostage locations which prove false.
- <sup>24</sup> Bolger, 87-88.
- <sup>25</sup> Ibid., 26.
- <sup>26</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>27</sup> Ibid., 26-27.
- <sup>28</sup> Ibid., 88-89.
- <sup>29</sup> Terrence C. Morgan, "Third World Arms Proliferation and Forced Entry Operations," (Unpublished Individual Study, 29 March 1990), 2.
- <sup>30</sup> Sun Tzu, The Art of War, trans. by S. B. Griffin (New York: Oxford Press, 1982), 93.

<sup>31</sup> Joint Chiefs of Staff Publication O-2, Unified Action Armed Forces (Washington, D.C.: JCS, December 1986), 3-2.

<sup>32</sup> William E. Depuy, "For the Joint Specialist: Five Steep Hills to Climb," Parameters, September 1989, 10.

<sup>33</sup> John H. Cushman, "Joint Command and Control," Military Review, July 1990, 26-27.

<sup>34</sup> Allan R. Millet and Williamson Murray, eds., Military Effectiveness: Volume I (London, England: Allen and Unwin, Inc., 1988), 14.

<sup>35</sup> Sam C. Sarkesian, ed., Combat Effectiveness: Cohesion, Stress, and the Volunteer Military (Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications, Inc., 1980), 35.

<sup>36</sup> Michael J. Barron, "Operational Level Command - Who's in Charge?" SAMS Monograph, 7 May 1988, 27-28.

<sup>37</sup> U.S. Marine Corps. Fleet Marine Force Manual 1, Warfighting (Washington, D.C.: HQMC, 6 March 1989), 62-63.

<sup>38</sup> William S. Lind, "The Operational Art," Marine Corps Gazette, April 1988, 45.

<sup>39</sup> Edward C. Meyers, et.al., The Reorganization of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (McLean, VA: Pergamon-Brassey's International, 1986), vii-viii.

<sup>40</sup> John Shy, "First Battles in Retrospect," in Charles E. Heller, et.al., America's First Battles, 1976-1965 (Lawrence, KS: University of Kansas Press, 1986), 327.

<sup>41</sup> Cushman, "Joint Command and Control," 25.

<sup>42</sup> Depuy, 5.

<sup>43</sup> Robert C. Fried, Performance in American Bureaucracies (Boston, MA: Little, Brown and Company, 1976), 6.

<sup>44</sup> Millet and Murray, 1.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 1-2.

<sup>46</sup> Sarkesian, 9.

<sup>47</sup> Clausewitz, 184.

<sup>48</sup> Sarkesian, 29.

<sup>49</sup> Millet and Murray, 2.

<sup>50</sup> Frank M. Snyder, Command and Control: Readings and Commentary (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, April, 1989), 14.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., 15.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., 39.

<sup>53</sup> S.L.A. Marshall, Men Against Fire (Gloucester, MA: Peter Smith, 1978),

<sup>54</sup> Robert J. Brooks, "Joint Command and Control: Search for the Holy Grail, (Unpublished research project, Maxwell Air Force Base, AL: April 1988), 18.

<sup>55</sup> Sarkesian, 77.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., 41.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., 204.

<sup>58</sup> Snyder, 27.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., 17.

<sup>60</sup> FMFM 1-1, 62-63.

<sup>61</sup> Snyder, 17.

<sup>62</sup> Sarkesian, 76.

<sup>63</sup> A. Galloway, "Operational Functions of U.S. Army Contingency Headquarters," (SAMS Monograph, 4 April 1986), 4.

<sup>64</sup> Millet and Murray, 1.

<sup>65</sup> Daniel P. Bolger, "Two Armies," Parameters, September 1989, 31.

<sup>66</sup> Bolger includes in this count the 1979 hostage rescue attempt in Iran - Operation Eagle Claw, the 1975 rescue of the Mayaguez crew, the 1981 downing of Libyan aircraft in the Gulf of Sidra, the 1983 Liberation of Grenada - Operation Urgent Fury, the 1986 Achille Lauro incident, the abortive 1983 "presence" mission for the Marines in Beirut, and the 1986 punitive strikes in Libya - Operation El Dorado Canyon. Bolger, Americans at War, 443.

<sup>67</sup> To Bolger's list of successes, we would add the 1987-1988 escort operations in the Persian Gulf - Operation Earnest Will, the 1988 "show of force" operations in Honduras - Operation Golden Pheasant, the 1989 "strike operation" in Panama - Operation Just Cause, and the back-to-back operations recently completed in Southwest Asia (SWA), Operation Desert Storm and Desert Shield.

<sup>68</sup> "In the future, for a given regional threat, operational concepts will be developed and alternative force level analyses will be conducted to account for four conditions of crisis onset; (a) slow-building, (b) fast-rising, (c) imminent conflict, and (d) conflict." Butler, 29.

<sup>69</sup> The only intelligence gathering tasks assigned to amphibious or ground reconnaissance units (as discussed in open sources) during Grenada were those of the SEALs for hydrographic reconnaissance and surf observation (SUROBS) conducted to support a Marine amphibious landing at Pearls and the abortive SEALs/Air Force Combat Control Team (CCT) initial terminal guidance (ITG) mission intended to support the Rangers at Salinas Airfield. All other special operations missions by ground units were direct action missions. No ground reconnaissance units were employed in support of intelligence gathering missions on Koh Tang prior to the Marine assault. However, available in the Western Pacific were advance force capable units including the Deep Reconnaissance Platoon (DRP), 3d Reconnaissance Battalion, 3d Marine Division and selected SEAL detachments. See Bolger, Americans at War, 297-303, and 43-44; see also Adkins, 167-170.

<sup>70</sup> Adkins, 131.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid.

<sup>72</sup> Morgan, 1.

<sup>73</sup> Metcalf, 284.

<sup>74</sup> Bolger, Americans at War, 53.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid., 32, 37.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid., 53.

<sup>77</sup> Metcalf, 283.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

<sup>79</sup> Richard W. Kokko, "Joint Operations Involving Marine Amphibious Forces and Army Airborne Forces," (unpublished individual study, June 1988), 7.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid., 19.

<sup>81</sup> Staff Report to the Committee on Armed Services, Defense Organization: The Need for Change (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 16 October 1985), 361.

<sup>82</sup> Metcalf, 282.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid.

- 84 Ibid., 283-284.
- 85 Ibid., 280.
- 86 Ibid.
- 87 Adkins, 127.
- 88 Ibid.
- 89 Ibid.
- 90 Snyder, 27.
- 91 Metcalf, 294.
- 92 U.S. Congressional Study, "Defense Organization: The Need for Change," Armed Forces Journal, October 1985, 42.
- 93 Metcalf, 294.
- 94 Fondren, "Joint Task Force Operations in the Persian Gulf," (Unpublished Individual Study, May 1989), 51.
- 95 Ibid.
- 96 Ibid.
- 97 Cushman, "Joint Command and Control," 26.

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